

APPENDIX E: Department Mission and Roles

The City of Seattle Human Services Department leads the City's work to find and fund solutions for human needs so that low income and vulnerable residents can live and thrive. The Department works closely with the community and other funders to assess emerging human services needs and develop responsive, proactive policy and program strategies to address these needs. Strategies utilize current "best practice" knowledge in the field of human services, build upon inherent strengths within the community, and are geared toward maximizing the potential of residents to live full, productive and independent lives.

The Department fulfills this mission through its roles as leader, funder and provider.

Leadership

The Human Services Department (HSD) is a leader in making strategic investments in the community. Our investments create opportunity and provide critical services to residents that are often marginalized and disenfranchised. Just as HSD recognizes the important responsibility government has in the provision of human services, we also recognize the critical and ongoing need improving the quality of our strategies to better serve the community. We believe that government can and should be a catalyst for change; HSD provides leadership through a variety of initiatives such as the Healthy Aging Partnership, Reinvesting in Youth, the Committee to End Homelessness and Project Lift-Off. These initiatives include a focus on social justice that targets racism, disproportionality in communities of color and other root causes of poverty.

Funder

The Human Services Department contracts with over two hundred community-based organizations to provide programs and services to clients. As a funder, the Department funds efficient, quality services that have clearly defined goals, outcomes, performance measures and service levels; makes funding decisions based on Request for Proposal (RFP) processes within service areas in four-year intervals; and involves community members in funding processes.

Service Provider

The Department limits its role as a provider of services to those situations where the fund source requires a municipality to serve as a provider, when no viable community based organization is available to provide a needed service, or when City administration is necessary to access another City resource¹.

¹ For example utility assistance requires City administration to access City Light resources.